

# Bridge News

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Robert Shore

### All Quiet on the Western Front



There isn't much to report at the District level this month, so this column will be shorter than is my usual wont. Several initiatives that I've reported on in the past are moving forward. I am continuing my efforts to assemble a committee with the goal of creating a program that will give high-school teachers (not to be confused with high schoolteachers) a substantial cash stipend – one much larger than the stipend currently offered by ACBL – to sponsor and teach a bridge club in their schools. I hope to have substantive progress to report on this issue next month.

We are in the process of engaging a law firm to protect the District's intellectual property via trademark filings. For example, our summer regional has been known as "Bridge Week" for decades. I would really hate for some other regional to make an effort to appropriate the name when everyone knows (or should know) that Bridge Week is the Summer's Best Regional. One of the firms we are considering for the work is my firm, so to avoid any conflict-of-interest issues, I intend to ask our Vice President and Treasurer, Jan Wickersham and Stan Holzberg, to make whatever efforts they deem appropriate to locate other candidate firms and then to make the final selection of a firm to perform the work.

Our efforts to create the Grand Slam Cup are progressing. We had hoped to work with the Western Conference to designate the other three grand slam regionals (obviously the first of the grand slam events will be Bridge Week, the Summer's Best Regional), but the Western Conference appears to be in the process of deciding that it's outlived its usefulness. So I'll be talking directly to our neighboring District Presidents in an effort to complete the grand slam

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## District Director Report

January 2020

by Kevin Lane

"Bridge is a game and should be fun."



### *Board re-organization motion*

The board will be reducing in size. The motion I wrote about in last month's column didn't happen to pass – I voted against as explained below – but a clear consensus favors board reductions. I am of course part of that consensus. And those changes will be happening sooner rather than later. To be clear, neither the re-org motion nor any San Francisco motions impact the District 23 organization itself. Of course, subsequent motions might well impact our District.

### *Transition Task Force*

A motion that did pass was the so-called transition task force which aims to move various bridge committees (as opposed to business committees) off of the board. I, of course, supported this motion since from my first days on the board I've advocated for a much stronger business focus on the national board. In fact, the entire premise of me seeking a board seat was a clear need for the national board to be more business-focused.

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line-up with the Autumn's Best Regional, the Winter's Best Regional, and the Spring's Best Regional.

I'm going to announce here one final goal that I view as aspirational (rather than set in stone). If the District Board chooses to reelect me at the conclusion of my current term, I will end up serving a total of four years as ALACBU President. That means I'll preside over a total of 12 District Board meetings during my time in office. Four of those meetings will be held in conjunction with Bridge Week, the Summer's Best Regional, in Long Beach. But that leaves eight more meetings to schedule. It turns out that District 23 has a total of nine units, Long Beach and eight others. So I intend to make an effort to ensure that each of our other Units has the opportunity to host a District Board meeting during my tenure. Our Fall meeting was Pomona's turn. Who's next? Tune in next month and see.

Something you want me to know? Contact me at Bob78164@yahoo.com.

DIRECTOR continued from page 1*More on the board re-org*

When I wrote last month, the full details of the proposal weren't yet available. My biggest concern was and is that the board will continue to be side-tracked from important issues by not just endless re-organization discussions but a raft of other issues. The Board of Governors meeting (held two days after the Board of Directors meeting) confirmed my fears in that that the Board of Governors strongly advocated for a more business-focused Board of Directors and then, minutes later, voted to require the Board of Directors to review several minor bridge-specific decisions we made.

An excellent presentation was delivered to the Board of Directors detailing a raft of future proposed changes to the board of directors. These are proposed changes BEYOND what was in the re-org motion. In short, the presentation, while a clear statement of direction, promises continued energy being applied to issues purely internal to the board rather than important issues about helping bridge. The good news is that the changes were proposed to be completed in a year. Unfortunately, while it's clear that the board favors a reduction, I don't yet see a consensus on these additional issues. Meanwhile, the business of the ACBL continues to demand attention it's not getting.

As I wrote in detail last month, I'm skeptical that this re-org will actually improve the board's decisions. It's likely to save some money, but this savings is unclear as there's already discussion of additional hiring staff at headquarters to take up work offloaded by the board. Nevertheless, it's highly likely I will vote in favor of re-org when the issue is revisited in early 2020. Two reasons. First, if the motion will pass eventually, it's better if it passes quickly. Second, a primary objection rightly voiced in San Francisco is that the board shouldn't rush into a massive change to how business has been conducted for 80+ years. The final full re-org motion was complex and the board only had a short time to digest it. By early next year, that won't be a problem.

*Sisyphus*

Sisyphus is the Greek mythological character condemned to roll a rock up a hill only to repeat the process when the rock rolls back down. Board re-org feels like that rock to me. No matter what changes are made there will always be requests for more change. Let's hope the board finds time to address the prosperity of bridge too.

Feel free to contact me at klaned23@gmail.com

## From the Director's Chair: *by Brian Richardson*

Penalty cards can be a source of confusion (and embarrassment) to players at many levels of competence. This article will attempt to clarify three aspects of penalty cards:

- What are penalty cards?
- Who can have a penalty card?
- How are penalty cards dealt with under the Laws of Bridge?

What are penalty cards?

A Penalty Card is a card that is exposed prematurely by a defender. For instance, if a defender leads a card when it was not his turn to lead, that card is a penalty card. Declarer can accept that lead if he wishes, or the card remains on the table as a Major Penalty Card.

What is a Major Penalty Card? It is **any** card that was intentionally, but incorrectly, played. Some examples of Major Penalty Cards are as follows:

- A card of a particular suit is led and the player faces a card of a different suit, even though he has one or more cards in the led suit. That incorrect card can be replaced with a card of the correct suit, IF it is done before he or his partner plays to the next trick. The incorrectly played card is a Major Penalty Card, and remains on the table.
- A defender leads a card when it is not his turn to lead. If declarer does not accept that lead, that card is a Major Penalty Card.
- Any honor card (Ace, King, Queen, Jack or Ten) which is faced **unintentionally**, e.g. it drops out of the player's hand, is also a Major Penalty Card. In addition, any honor card that is incorrectly played/exposed is a Major Penalty Card.

If there are Major Penalty Cards it is logical to assume that there are also Minor Penalty Cards. Some examples of Minor Penalty Cards are as follows:

- A non-honor card drops out of a defender's hand. That card remains on the table as a Minor Penalty Card.
- Say a defender leads the  $\diamond 5$ , and as he does so a second card, behind that card, also hits the table. If that second card was not an honor card, it becomes a Minor Penalty Card. If that second card was an honor card then it is a Major Penalty Card.

#### Who Can Have a Penalty Card?

The only players who can have a penalty card, either Major or Minor, are the defenders. Neither declarer nor dummy can ever have a penalty card. It is, however, important to note that declarer **can** be penalized if he has revoked in either his own hand or in dummy.

#### How are Penalty Cards Dealt With, Under the Laws of Bridge?

As a preamble to this section there are two important points of which players need to be aware. The first of these is that it is the Director's role to determine whether the penalty card is Major or Minor. The second of these is that the Director will explain to the declarer the options that are available.

**The important fact is that ONLY the Director can decide these issues. If the Director is not called to the table, players can lose the protection provided by the Laws.**

Major Penalty Card. If a defender has such a card on the table AND it is his turn to lead, that card **MUST** be led. If the partner of the player with a Major Penalty Card is on lead, declarer has three choices. He can instruct that player to lead a card of the same suit as the penalty card, or he can forbid him from leading a card of that suit. If he chooses either of those options then the penalty card is picked up and placed back in the defender's hand. *[If Declarer forbids the lead of the suit of the penalty card, that restriction applies as long as that defender retains the lead.]* Declarer can also instruct the player on lead to lead any suit he wishes, and that includes a card in the suit of the Penalty Card. Unless declarer has required or denied the lead of the suit of the Penalty Card, that card remains on the table and must be played at the first legal opportunity.

**Definition: a Major Penalty Card is any card intentionally faced by a defender, BUT the play was illegal, e.g. it was not the person's turn to play, or he was not following suit when he had a card in the suit led. Any card, including cards 2 through 9, are Major Penalty Cards if they are faced illegally. If an honor card is unintentionally exposed by a defender that card is also a Major Penalty card.**

Minor Penalty Card. A non-honor card (any card from 2 to 9), that is faced unintentionally is a Minor Penalty Card. This means that, if a non-honor card drops out of a defender's hand, or is faced while the defender is playing another card, then that is a Minor Penalty Card. There are no lead restrictions incurred by a defender with a Minor Penalty Card. Declarer can neither require or deny the lead of that suit. In addition, the defender with such a penalty card does not have to play that specific card when the suit is led. The defender may play an honor card instead, BUT the original Minor Penalty Card remains on the table until it is legally played e.g. discarded.

#### TWO or MORE PENALTY CARDS

If a defender is on lead and has 2 or more penalty cards **none** of those cards are Minor Penalty Cards. While one of those cards may have initially been designated as Minor, Law 50B specifically states that when a player has more than one penalty card

choose “Play,” the defense will be perfect. If you choose “Defend,” declarer will play the hand optimally. The problem will be presented in three sections: 1) the problem and opening lead, 2) a hint, 3) the answer.

North  
 ♠ A J 8 5 4  
 ♥ 9 7 3  
 ♦ 8 4  
 ♣ J 7 2

<u>West</u>		<u>East</u>
♠ Q 7 6		♠ K 10 2
♥ 8 2		♥ K J 10 6
♦ 9		♦ 10 6 5
♣ A K 10 9 5 4 3		♣ Q 8 6
	<u>South</u>	
	♠ 9 3	
	♥ A Q 5 4	
	♦ A K Q J 7 3 2	
	♣ void	

Contract	5♦
Opening lead	♣K

Well, what will it be? Will you play ... or defend ... 5♦? If you'd like a hint, it's on page 9. The solution may be found on page 11.

Yeah, I know that guy!  
He's a bridge player.

This month, we introduce a new feature to the SCBN. Play or Defend hands are a version of double dummy problems: you can see all the cards (no auction is needed). Both sides play perfectly. If you

## District 23 Rank Changes November 2019

### Junior Master

Joan E. Armenia  
 Alex S. Geczy  
 Mark Maltzman  
 Jim Powers  
 Melinda Raine  
 Susan L. Reitnouer  
 Kelly Yao

### Sectional Master

Ann L. Hinchliffe  
 Mike Joseph  
 Steven Novak  
 Gavin W. Spore  
 Peter S. Wong  
 Jeof H. Wyrik  
 Wanda Yao

### Life Master

Cheri S. Bitar  
 William H. Miles, Jr.  
 Larisa Rappaport  
 Mark S. Rappaport

### Bronze Life Master

John H. Berg, Jr.

### Club Master

Susann G. Bauman  
 Joseph R. Kraus  
 Jennifer T. Lerner  
 Robin W. Rosser  
 Jeffrey Silver  
 Michael M. Zelichov

### Regional Master

James R. Degner  
 Russel G. Gray  
 Larry S. Kong  
 Judy Percer  
 Elaine Robinson  
 Sandra J. Schlosser  
 Tomoko Y. Stock

### Silver Life Master

Jacqueline Stultz

### Gold Life Master

Thomas M. Lesser  
 Sherie Schneider

### Sectional Master

Kelley A. Butcher  
 Danielle Dina  
 Linda H. Gasset  
 Frances L. Gross  
 Kim R. Gundlach

### NABC Master

Alton Arbisser  
 Alan J. Cohen  
 Paul Marjoram

### Sapphire Life Master

Marel K. Bates  
 Willam J. Brodek, Jr.

### Diamond Life Master

Amr O. Elghamry  
 John R. Melis

I remember a player who came reeling away from the table, a handkerchief pressed against his mouth so his laughter wouldn't disturb the other players. What was so funny? I asked him. He told me that his partner had just gone down 1400 points at three no trump, and after taking this horrendous beating, the partner had said in total seriousness: "If they'd led clubs, they'd have killed me!" [Charles Goren, from Bridge Is My Game – the Lessons of a Lifetime]



## New (more-or-less) Life Masters

Twice a year, we photographically honor those District 23 members who have achieved the rank of Life Master. Unfortunately, our request for photos seems to have fallen on deaf ears (computer screens?) this time. Well, what the whatever, we'll include what we have, with our Congratulations:



Jojo Sarkar  
West Hills



Hanan Mogharbel  
Glendora



Robert Johann  
Redondo Beach

### Not submitting photos were:

Anne L. Hurwitz	Woodland Hills
Jerold A. Rose	Calabasas
Patricia A. Berg	Rancho Palos Verdes
Marcia Bocan	Los Angeles
Judi Friedlander	Los Angeles
Bruce G. Schelden	Playa del Rey
Douglas I. Timmer	Porter Ranch
Alexander Wiles	Los Angeles
Bob Weingarten	Los Angeles
Lisa Caras	Los Angeles
William L. Dilks	Long Beach
Sharyn J. Miller	Chatsworth
Joan .C. Oliver	Los Angeles
Ernest A. Ross	Long Beach
Kathleen K. Shinkle	Hermosa Beach
Roy J. Tomooka	Cypress
Judy T. Zucker	Santa Monica
Lou M. Zucker	Santa Monica

# LOS ANGELES PRESENTS THE 86TH ANNUAL BRIDGE WEEK

## The Summer's Best Regional\* JUNE 29-JULY 5

## TOURNAMENT HIGHLIGHTS

DAYLIGHT SCHEDULE! 299ER GAMES EVERY DAY!  
PILE UP YOUR GOLD POINTS IN OUR GOLD RUSH PAIRS!  
STAR SPEAKERS EVERY DAY! SATURDAY SPECIAL SHOW!

MONDAY JUNE 29TH

\*\* Free 2-hour Bridge Workshop

10:30 am - 12:30 pm

Followed by Lunch

Marjorie Michelin  
Grand Life Master

\*\* Pro Am Game at 1:00 pm

Card fee for Am's: \$15

Please register before June 22

Dalia Hernandez

daliahernandez@gmail.com

562.221.1398

NEED A PARTNER?

Jan Wickersham

wickershamjanet@gmail.com

626.487.4014

TOURNAMENT MANAGER:

Peter Benjamin

ahoneydo@aol.com

310.720.6050

DIRECTOR-IN-CHARGE:

Ken Horwedel

District 23 Director: Kevin Lane

District 23 President: Bob Shore



HILTON LONG BEACH

701 West Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, CA

Room Rate: \$149 (Free Wifi) Please Refer to ALACBU

Reservation must be made by Monday, June 15

562.983.3400

Card Fees: \$15 (Members) \$19 (expired Members)

Notice: Non-members will be required to either join ACBL on an annual basis or on a new temporary one month membership for \$7.99.

Self Parking: \$12

Lunch: \$5 for Sunday Lunch

\* First leg of the Grand Slam Cup

Background Photo Credit: Long Beach Convention & Visitor's Bureau

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Monday, June 2020

299er Free Workshop/Lunch (Reserv. Rqd.)..... 10:30 am

Pro-Am Pairs (Reserv. Rqd.)..... 1:00 pm

Aft Side Game Series (1 of 6)..... 1:00 pm

Stratified Charity Pairs..... 7:00 pm

Stratified Swiss Teams (1 of 2 Sessions)..... 7:00 pm

Tuesday, June 30, 2020

AM Side Game Series (1 of 5)..... 10:00 am

299er Pairs (Single Session)..... 10:00 am

Betsy Ross KO (1 & 2 of 4)..... 10:00 am & 3:00 pm

Bernie Mateer Open ABC Pairs ..... 10:00 am & 3:00 pm

GOLD RUSH Pairs..... 10:00 am & 3:00 pm

Guest Lecture..... 2:15 pm

Aft Side Game Series (2 of 6)..... 3:00 pm

Stratified Swiss Teams (Single Session)..... 3:00 pm

Stratified Swiss Teams (2 of 2 Sessions)..... 7:00 pm

Wednesday, July 1, 2020

AM Side Game Series (2 of 5)..... 10:00 am

299er Pairs (Single Session)..... 10:00 am

Firecracker KO (1 & 2 of 4)..... 10:00 am & 3:00 pm

Betsy Ross KO (3 & 4 of 4)..... 10:00 am & 3:00 pm

Richard Patterson Open Pairs ..... 10:00 am & 3:00 pm

Mark Schreiber GOLD RUSH Pairs ..... 10:00 am & 3:00 pm

Guest Lecture..... 2:15 pm

Aft Side Game Series (3 of 6) ..... 3:00 pm

Stratified Swiss Teams (Single Session)..... 3:00 pm

Thursday, July 2, 2020

AM Side Game Series (3 of 5)..... 10:00 am

299er Pairs (Single Session)..... 10:00 am

Starburst KO (1 & 2 of 4)..... 10:00 am & 3:00 pm

Firecracker KO (3 & 4 of 4)..... 10:00 am & 3:00 pm

Open ABC Pairs..... 10:00 am & 3:00 pm

Pat Banks GOLD RUSH Pairs ..... 10:00 am & 3:00 pm

Guest Lecture..... 2:15 pm

Aft Side Game Series (4 of 6)..... 3:00 pm

Stratified Swiss Teams (Single Session)..... 3:00 pm

Friday, July 3, 2019

AM Side Game Series (4 of 5)..... 10:00 am

Walt Otto 299er Pairs (Single Session)..... 10:00 am

0-99er Pairs (Single Session)..... 10:00 am

Starburst KO (3 & 4 of 4)..... 10:00 am & 3:00 pm

Stratified Swiss Teams ..... 10:00 am & 3:00 pm

Cecil Cook Open ABC Pairs ..... 10:00 am & 3:00 pm

GOLD RUSH Pairs ..... 10:00 am & 3:00 pm

Guest Lecture..... 2:15 pm

Aft Side Game Series (5 of 6)..... 3:00 pm

Youth Reception ..... 6:30 pm

Saturday, July 4, 2020

AM Side Game Series (5 of 5)..... 10:00 am

299er Pairs (Single Session)..... 10:00 am

Queen Mary Compact KO (1 & 2 of 4)..... 10:00 am

Barbara Nussbaum Open ABC Pairs ..... 10:00 am & 3:00 pm

Saturday, July 4, 2020

GOLD RUSH Pairs ..... 10:00 am & 3:00 pm

Aft Side Game Series (6 of 6)..... 3:00 pm

Queen Mary Compact KO (3 & 4 of 4)..... 3:00 pm

Stratified Swiss Teams (Single Session)..... 3:00 pm

Sunday, July 5, 2020

Liberty Bell Stratified Fast Pairs..... 10:00 am & TBA

Flight A/X/Y Swiss Teams (7 x 7)..... 10:00 am & TBA

Bracketed B Swiss Teams (7 x 7)..... 10:00 am & TBA

Event Colors:

299ers: Orange Teams: Green Pairs: Blue

299er Games Every AM Compact KO on Sat

Side Games Every Day Swiss Teams Every PM

Open Pairs Every Day (4 x 6 Boards)

Gold Rush Pairs Tu - Sa Sunday Swiss Teams

Done by 6 PM

Stratified Pairs: 0 - 750 / 750 - 3000 / 3000+

Open ABC Pairs:

0 - 2500 / 2500 - 5000 / 5000+

GOLD RUSH Pairs:

0 - 100 / 100 - 300 / 300 - 750

A/X/Y Swiss Teams:

0 - 3000 / 3000 - 5000 / 5000+

Bracketed B Swiss Teams: 0 - 2500

8 Teams/Bracket: Top 3/Bracket Win Gold



## Around the Units in District 23



### Long Beach by Jon Yinger

[www.acblunit557.org](http://www.acblunit557.org)  
[www.LongBeachBridge.com](http://www.LongBeachBridge.com)

**December 15 Unit Game:** Overall results: 1st in A Eva Roz/Penny Wentworth, 2nd John Petrie/Sankar Reddy, 3rd Kay Tseng/Wayne Rapp, 4th Judith Jones/Al Appel, 5th Colleen Gardner/John Melis, 6th Jackie Hess/Cory Hand. In the B flight overalls Hanefi Erten/Oliver Yildiz were 4th, Jenny Ernest/Bonnie Shok 5th. In the C flight overalls Melanie and Jerome Smith were 2nd, Sylvia Kaprelyan/Sharon Beran 3rd, Carol Herzlinker/Lois Mullen 4th. And in the 199er game Pamela Haskins/Freda Main were 1st, Jane and Darrel Mason 2nd, Ted Dowe/Melanie Smothers 3rd. Congratulations to all!!

**70% GAMES** Nov 16 through Dec 15: In open games: Nov 24 Mike Walsh/Loran Wallace had 71.48%. Dec 11 John Petrie/Sankar Reddy had 75%. Dec 14 Betty Witteried/Jon Yinger had 73.33%. And in NLM and beginner games: Nov 18 Sharon Civalleri/Terry Marte-Greco had 70.88%. Nov 22 Dan Frank/Ray Ishaek had 75%. Nov 25 Darlene Oliver/Nohj Semj had 70.83%. Dec 7 Lillian Slater/Steve Rowe had 75%. Dec 4 Jan and Rita Van Leirop had 71.25%. Dec 9 Jan and Rita Van Lierop had 85.60%. Congratulations to all nine pairs!

**BIG MASTER POINT AWARDS** Nov 16 through Dec 15: In the team game Nov 16 the team of Betty McClellan/Peggy Waite/Bill McClean/John Crabtree came in 1st each winning 3.15mp. In the STaC game Dec 11 John Petrie/Sankar Reddy won 21 silver points for 1st in the district. In the STaC game Dec 14 Betty Witteried/Jon Yinger won 19 silver points for 1st in the district. And in the Unit Game Dec 15 Eva Mroz/Penny Wentworth won 3.94mp for 1st overall. Congratulations to all!

**NEW CLUB MEMBERS:** Chia Yao, D. Brown. Welcome to the club!

**STATUS CHANGES:** New Jr. Master: Jeannette Williams. New Sectional Masters: Leo Dittmore, Harriet Weiss. New NABC Master: Mark Singer. New Silver Life Master: April Berg. New Gold Life Master: Cliff Goodrich. Congratulations to you all!

**CONDOLENCES** to family and friends of Mimi Spain and Bob Mault, both of whom passed away this month. Bob was a pillar of the club for several decades. He was a great mentor, teacher and a dear friend. He will be sorely missed.

**GET WELL:** Phyllis Parker, Marcie Evans

#### **UP-COMING EVENTS AT THE CLUB:**

Dec 16 ACBL-wide International Fund Game. Extra points, \$12 card fee

Dec 25 (Wednesday) Club closed—Christmas Day

Jan 1 New Years Day---club open

Jan 18 Picnic lunch—hot dogs

Jan 19 Swiss Teams

Jan 20 Birthday Monday Play for \$5 on your January birthday

Jan 25 Chinese New Year

Jan 26 Unit Game 12:30pm \$8 card fee dessert

Jan 27-Feb 2 Costa Mesa Regional

#### **NEWS FROM LEISURE WORLD**

##### **BRIDGE CLUBS**

**Judy Carter-Johnson**

**UNIT GAME:** Clubhouse #1-November 15: Judith Jones/Al Appel 1 in A. Joan Tschirki/Fred Rejer 2 in A. Jeanette Estill/Marilyn McClintock 3 in A. Diane Schmitz/Sybil Smith 4 in A. Louise Siefert/Stam Johnson 5 in A, 1 in B, 1 in C. Priscilla Cailloutte/Larry Topper tied with Sue Boswell/Ted Cooper for 2/3 in B. Ellen Kice/Russ Gray were 4 in B, 2 in C.

**CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP GAME:** Clubhouse #3-November 21: Thad Mikols/Larry



Topper 1 in A. Emma Trepinski/Bill Linskey 2 in A, 1 in B. Joyce Henderson/Howard Smith 3 in A. Joan and Ted Wieber 4 in A, 2 in B. Sibyl Smith/Marilyn McClintock 5 in A. Fern and Hank Dunbar 6 in A. Sally Fenton/Miranda Reddy 3 in B, 1 in C. Russ Gray/Fred Reker 4 in B. Sue Boswell/Ted Cooper 2 in C. Judy Cook/Frances Gross 3 in C. Priscilla Cailloutte/Harriet Weiss 4 in C.

### UPGRADED CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

**GAME:** Clubhouse #3-December 5: Sue Boswell/Joan Tschirki 1 in A. Fern Dunbar/Lavonne McQuilkin 2 in A. Jeanette Estill/Ted Cooper 3 in A, 1 in B. George Alemshah/Martin Lipman 4 in A, 2 in B. Sue Fardette/Bud Parish 5 in A, 3 in B. Patricia and Robert Adam 6 in A. Judith Hirsch/Judy Mathias 4 in B, 1 in C. Monica and Paul Honey 5 in B, 2 in C. Bobbie Vann/Paul Chen 6 in B. Kay Hyland/Bill Power 3 in C. Richard Norris/Ron Yaffee 4 in C.

### CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP GAME:

Clubhouse #1-December 13: Thad Mikols/Larry Topper 1 in A. Lavonne McQuilkin/Carol Murakoshi 2 in A. Sue Fardette/Marilyn McClintock 3 in A. Linda and Dick Stein 4 in A. Mike Nielson/Linda Nye 5 in A, 1 in B, 1 in C. Fern and Hank Dunbar 6 in A. George Alemshah/Martin Lipman 2 in B. Sharon Beran/Sylvia Kaprelyan 3 in B. Louise Seifert/Stan Johnson 4 in B, 2 in C. Monica and Paul Honey 5 in B, 3 in C. Joyce Basch/Nancy Lichter 4 in C.

**CONGRATULATIONS:** Harriet Weiss is now a Sectional Master.

**GET WELL:** We wish one of our Directors Alan Flower a speedy recovery. Also to Winnie Warga - a speedy recovery.

**CONDOLENCES** to the family and friends of Bob Mault. Bob was a great bridge player, former director as well as teacher. He will be missed.

Any news for next month's column, please email me @ [jcj90740@gmail.com](mailto:jcj90740@gmail.com) Results of all Leisure World games are posted on [www.acblunit557.org](http://www.acblunit557.org)

### Hint for "Play or Defend?"

Declarer has 9 top tricks in six diamonds and three side aces. A heart finesse will yield a tenth trick. The heart finesse will get declarer up to ten tricks. The spade suit is an illusion, so the eleventh trick will need to be a heart ruff in dummy. Can declarer secure it? Can the defense stop it?



Pomona –  
Covina  
by Tom Lill  
[www.acblunit551.org](http://www.acblunit551.org)

Unit Game: Saturday January 18,  
11:00 a.m., Glendora

Individual: Saturday, January 4, San Dimas

As you will have noted above, we have decided to continue the monthly individual at Bridge41. (No, the jokes don't ever get any better, and can't get any worse. Don't see a joke here? Try pronouncing the club name one digit at a time ...)

Speaking of which, the December Individual was a tie between Roger Boyar and Al Lax, 63.54%. Linda Tessier and Steve Mancini tied for third.

The Upgraded Club Championship (which I promised last month) will be held on Friday, January 10. Extra masterpoints, no extra card fee.

The December Unit game was captured by Fredy and Lulu Minter, with an impressive 75% game. I (distant!) second we find Gerard Geremia - Amr Elghamry, Penny Barbieri - Gino Barbieri third, and Kiran Kumar - Roger Boyar fourth. Tim and Eileen Finlay took first in Flight C.

36 players won 77.92 points in December. I suppose that's not *too* bad, considering the holiday festivities and all. Topping the list were Fredy and Lulu Minter, with 10.11 points each. A distant second was Roger Boyar, with 5.74. Fourth was Vic Sartor, 3.63; and Bill Papa rounded out the top five with 3.39.

The top game in December was by Bill Papa – Vic Sartor, with 69.57%, followed closely by the Minters with 67.48%. No other pair managed to top the 65% mark, although in Individual events Claudia Cochran scored 68.75% and Ho Ming Yim managed 66.67%. Other winners: Roger Boyar, Linda Tessier, Amr Elghamry, and Dominique Moore.

One promotion this month. Amr Elghamry has reached the dizzying heights of Diamond Life Master.

Not too many Unit members attended the recent Regional out in Rancho Mirage, but those who did, did very well. Bill Papa topped the list with 37.09

points. (For some reason, Bill's name does not show up in any actual event; so I can't tell you what brought in all those points.) Tim and Eileen Finlay gathered 23.62, taking first overall in a 54 table Gold Rush, followed by a 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish in a 59 table Gold Rush. Hanan Mogharbel was right behind them, 22.31 points, taking first in a bracketed Swiss, then first in a BCD Swiss, and third in the Sunday 0-2000 Swiss. Harish Singh brought home 18.61 points, finishing fourth in his KO bracket, and first in his Sunday 0-2000 Swiss bracket. David Ochroch was awarded 9.37 points, with his best result a 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 0-2000 Swiss. Darlene and Tom Sessions came away with 4.96 points.

Our Hand-of-the-Month this time is strictly for comic relief. You have to see the whole deal to get the full flavor. North deals, N-S are vulnerable. You are East:

	♠ J	
	♥ Q J 9 4	
	♦ J 10 3	
	♣ A Q 9 6 2	
♠ K 10 8 3		♠ A 6 5
♥ none		♥ A 10 8 6 3
♦ A 7 6 2		♦ 9 8 5
♣ K 10 7 4 3		♣ J 8
	♠ Q 9 7 4 2	
	♥ K 7 5 2	
	♦ K Q 4	
	♣ 5	

This hand is strictly for comic relief. North opens 1♣, South calls 1♠. N-S are playing a "big club" system, so North can now go 2♥ without promising a big hand. South raises to 3♥, which becomes the final contract. You, sitting East, have to find a lead. Well, you can eliminate three suits, so you try your luck with the ♦9. Partner (possibly hoping you've led from a doubleton and can get a ruff?) ducks, dummy's King winning. A club to the Queen wins. Out comes the ♠J, which you win. You'd like to protect partner's clubs, so you must lead a trump. OK, you know where they all are, so let's give declarer a short-lived thrill and lead the ♥3. It goes ♥2, diamond, and declarer's ♥4 wins the first trump trick! It's good news-bad news for declarer, of course, as you are now going to win THREE trump tricks as declarer tries to cross-ruff the hand. Down one, for a near-top!

Quote for the month: "Art, like morality, consists in drawing the line somewhere." (G. K. Chesterson)



## Santa Clarita-Antelope Valley by Beth Morrin

### Election of Board of Directors for Santa Clarita and Antelope Valley:

The Unit 556 Board election will be held Sunday, January 19<sup>th</sup> at Joshua Tree Bridge Club, 2747 West Ave. L, Lancaster. A catered lunch will be provided at 11:30 AM, followed by the General Membership meeting and election of the board members for 2020. A Unit game will follow at 12:30 PM. Please RSVP to Paula Olivares ([paula@pacbell.net](mailto:paula@pacbell.net)) or Beth Morrin ([morrin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:morrin@sbcglobal.net)).

### Results of the Western Conference Holiday STaC Games:

#### Monday Afternoon in Santa Clarita, December 9<sup>th</sup>: North/South

1 <sup>st</sup>	Bert Stock – Roy Ladd	66.33%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Rand Pinsky – John Langer	62.16%
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Carol Reukauf – Paul Reukauf	60.12%

#### East/West

1 <sup>st</sup>	Bernard Seal – John Vacca	63.86%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Robert McBroom – Donna Davidson	57.91%
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Melisse Benson – Jackie Moor	53.74%

#### Friday Afternoon Aux. Pairs in Palmdale, December 13<sup>th</sup>:

1 <sup>st</sup>	Donald Pearson – Beth Morrin	61.31%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Henry Roediger – Sharry Vida	55.00%
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Russ Buker – Sue Guzenske	51.00%

#### Friday Afternoon Aux. Pairs in Palmdale, December 15<sup>th</sup>:

1 <sup>st</sup>	Russ Buker – Kristi Kubo	61.00%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Rosalee McEntyre – Kay Aiken	55.00%
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Donald Pearson – Beth Morrin	51.00%

Congratulations to the players who did well at the Palm Springs Regional:

Kathy Swaine, Carol Ashbacher, Mira Rowe and Ron Oest were 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Monday Bracketed RR #5 Team game. Bernard Seal and John Vacca were 3<sup>rd</sup> overall in the Gold Rush Pairs on both Tuesday and Wednesday.

Next Board meeting: TBA



## San Fernando Valley by Linda Silvey

### Unit 561 Holiday Bridge/Dinner Party Report

A very successful Unit 561 Holiday Bridge and Dinner Party was held on Saturday, November 30 at The 750 Bridge Club in Woodland Hills. A bridge game of 22.5 tables was held in the afternoon and ably directed by Mike Fierman. This was followed by dinner catered by Stonefire Grill. Special thanks are due to the Party Committee consisting of Marcia Broderick, Frona DeCovnick, Ann Dupont, Ilene Feinstein, Carol Levin, Rochelle Lotto, Terry Morton, Jojo Sarkar, Jerry Shapiro, Karyn Shatzkin, and Linda Silvey.

Winners in the Open bridge game were: NS – Rochelle Lotto-Steve Lotto 64.65%, Noel Purkin-Tammy Purkin 63.83%, Peter Koenig-Susan Koenig 62.88%, Janice Richter-Freddie Straus 59.82%, and Martin Hurwitz-Dwight Hunt 57.76%; EW – Jeff Goldberg-Jojo Sarkar 66.54%, Carol Levin-Susan Raphael 60.11%, Sin Orenshtein-Mark Peters 59.40%, Vera Iobbi-Genise Hassan 58.67%, and Mark Gould-A.D. Shah 58.41%.

### Special Congratulations

November Top Ten Masterpoints at The 750 Bridge Club were Ray Primus 11.21, Martin Hurwitz 9.16, Dwight Hunt 8.96, Dick Bratkovich 7.84, Noel Putkin 7.65, Tammy Purkin 7.65, Gary Baxley 7.49, Jerry Goodman 6.69, Ravnesh Amar 6.53, and R. Gasway 6.52. The following pairs achieved 70% games: Mike Klemens-Leila Greenfield 76.36%, Martin Hurwitz-R. Gasway 71.43%, and Vera Mandell-Ron Malkin 70.41%.

### January 21: Braemar Dinner/Bridge Night

The next Braemar Dinner/Bridge Night will be held Tuesday, January 21. Dinner is \$20 per person and starts at 6 p.m. and the bridge is \$5 per person and begins at 7 p.m. This is an ACBL sanctioned game and the first place NS and EW winners will receive coupons for Braemar's Wednesday night "Taste of Tuscany" dinner. For reservations and/or partnerships contact Nancy Klemens at [nrklemens@aol.com](mailto:nrklemens@aol.com) or (818) 609-1071.

### January Event at The 750 Bridge Club

Monday-Friday, January 13-17, will be Club Membership Week. Upgraded black points will be awarded for no additional fees. Both players must be ACBL members for the partnership to earn masterpoints. However, "instant" membership forms will be available at The Club.

### Calendar

**Wednesday, January 1,** The 750 Bridge Club will be closed for the Holiday.

**Monday-Friday, January 13-17,** Club Membership Week at The 750 Bridge Club. Extra black points will be awarded for no extra fee.

**Tuesday, January 21,** Braemar Dinner/Bridge Night starting at 6 p.m. See details above.

**Saturday, March 21,** Unit 561 Awards Luncheon/Game, 12noon, at The 750 Club.

## Downey – Whittier by Linda Eagan and Liz Burrell

*[Editor's Note: no news from Unit 564 this month. Stay tuned!]*

### Solution to "Play or Defend?"

Choose play! Declarer needs to ruff the opening lead and duck a heart. The ♠A will provide an entry to dummy for the heart finesse. Declarer must be careful to play exactly one round of trumps (which might be drawn by the defense) before trying to ruff the fourth heart in the dummy. Thank you to Julian Pottage for the theme of this problem.

# Problem Solvers' Panel

Moderator: John Jones

Panelists are: Mark Bartusek, Ed Davis, Mitch Dunitz, Jeff Goldsmith, Mister Mealy-mouth, Mike Shuster, and Jon Wittes.

# 1

Matchpoints  
E-W Vul

West	North	East	South
	1♠	2♣	2♥
pass	2♠*	pass	???

\* non-forcing

You, South, hold: ♠void ♥K109764 ♦J10754 ♣KQ

What call do you make?

This column is dedicated to the memory of Bob Mault. Bob was a strong player out of the Long Beach Bridge Club. Some people are natural born teachers: Bob was one of them. Bob was extremely good at helping beginning players become intermediate and advanced players. His kindness and patience were extraordinary. I can still hear him emphasizing “Don’t overcall on rags.” Thank you for your wonderful contribution to bridge Bob.

*[We'll start the year with a problem Mark Bartusek presented. The 2♥ bid looks aggressive to me, even with a style that it doesn't promise a rebid. I'd make a negative double. It's harder to uncover a 6-3 or a 6-2 heart fit that way, but it's easier to get to a diamond partial and to stay low. Mark and Ed Davis are following with a 3♦ bid, which will probably be read as game forcing by partner. They are planning to pass below game if possible. Let's hear from the 3♦ bidders.]*

**Davis:** 3♦. I'm not familiar with a system where partner's 2♠ rebid can end the auction. Don't I promise another bid when I bid 2♥ (even if it is only 3♥)? What does partner rebid over 2♥ with ♠AQxxx ♥Ax ♦Qxx ♣xxx? Wishing to avoid playing in their eight-card spade fit, I would bid 3♦. On good days, partner will preference 3♥ or raise to 4♦ (I will pass either bid). On the more frequent not-so-good days, partner will bid 3♠. I will pass and hope partner doesn't sadly shake his head and inform me that it is hopeless not to pass 2♠ with this hand.

**Bartusek:** 3♦. Sure, partner will assume it is game forcing; but I'm going to pass anything partner bids! Some people might try to sign-off now by rebidding 3♥ risking a disastrous 6-0 or 6-1 fit (or preferred an initial negative double followed by a 3♥ sign-off). I realize that usually the best policy is to pass and stay low with misfits; but I believe adopting that philosophy with this 6-5 hand is being too pessimistic. Consider partner's likely continuations: 3♥ on a doubleton - perfect!; 4♦ raise - perfect!; 3♠ - bad, but at least I'll know that partner has 7+ or a semi-solid 6-bagger; 3NT or 4♣ - extremely unlikely with my holding the KQ tight of clubs. An occasional partner gave me this hand and she revealed that partner was 6=2=3=2 and encountered a horrible 5-2 break (♠A3 opposite ♠Q10987).

*[Mark mentions 3♥, 3♠, 3NT, 4♣ and 4♦ as possible rebids for partner. He didn't mention some jump bids: 4♠, 5♣, and 5♦. 4♠ is probably down one or two, but unlikely to get doubled given that we have had a strong auction and that partner will have excellent spades. 5♣ is a splinter bid in support of diamonds. Again, we are likely to be too high, but in the best strain (diamonds). 5♦ is either Fast Arrival or showing excellent trumps (depending on your systems agreements). Getting to 5♦ will again will likely be down, but unlikely to get doubled and might score better than 2♠, especially if partner was forced into rebidding a five card suit., I mentioned the 3♦ to Jon Wittes, who thought that 3♦ was “bucking the odds over the long haul”.*



*[One other panelists bids again. Mister Mealy-mouth tries 3♥.]*

**Mealy-mouth:** 3♥. My 2♥ response virtually twisted my partner's arm to rebid 2♠ unless he has three-card heart support or substantial extras. I mustn't leave the poor soul to suffer in 2♠ despite my limited strength. Neither dare I force him to bid again by bidding ♦. Instead, I'll hope for a doubleton (but even a singleton ♥Q will do) by bailing out in 3♥, which is clearly non-forcing. Incidentally, though it is a popular treatment to play an initial jump to 3♥ in this auction as weak, I think it much more useful to play it as invitational (perhaps slightly shaded) and with most partners I could have jumped to 3♥ last turn. *[The most common treatment among non-experts in this situation is that jumps are weak. The most common treatment among experts is probably that jumps are "Fitted" or "Flower Bids". They show Limit Raise or better values with 5 cards in the bid suit and four plus cards in partner's opening bid.]* By the way, I assume we are still playing penalty doubles, else I'd have started with Sputnik, as Daddy used to call it, perhaps reaching a superior diamond partscore opposite ♠A10984 ♥A ♦KQ96 ♣875 or similar. *[Negative doubles were originally called Sputnik because they were first played about the time the Soviet Union launched the first artificial satellite (October 4, 1957). There were several players who had suggested that doubles should be used as something other than big stack penalty doubles, but the primary inventor/proponent of negative doubles was Al Roth.]*

*[I've been asked several times over the years who is Mister Mealy-mouth? Could he really be the son of the late Al Roth? No, I'll give you that. Mealy is not Al's son!]*

*[The rest of the panel chooses my call, "Pass".]*

**Shuster:** Pass. I don't care for the treatment where 2♥ doesn't promise a rebid, but here we are. Hopefully partner has some extra spades to offer 2♠ as a contract into the face of a misfit, but even if he doesn't, it is time to stop this train.

**Wittes:** Pass. I don't like it, but this is a horrible misfit. I have half of my values in the opponent's suit, no fit for partner, and suspect suits of my own. Sure, partner could have a fit for diamonds once in a while, but on these hands, I feel it's best to get out as low as possible.

**Dunitz:** Pass. Ugh!

**Goldsmith:** Pass. Looks like a misfit looms. I'm out of here.

2

IMPs  
Both Vul

West	North	East	South
		1♥	1♠
pass	2♣	2H	???
You, South, hold: ♠AKJ753 ♥KJ10 ♦4 ♣A86			

What call do you make?

**Shuster:** You have withheld critical information about the nature of 2♣.

*[I'm guilty as charged. I assume that 2♣ was non-forcing constructive, in other words natural and 7 to 14 HCP depending on suit length, shape, texture and honor location.]*

*[This hand was used about 2 decades ago by a Texas moderator. I found the hand interesting because the problem elicited so many different responses. His fifteen-player panel answered 7 different calls: double, 2♠, 2NT, 3♣, 3♥, 3♠, 3NT. His panelists answered 4 more calls which probably included 4♣ and 2♠ since he gave those calls a score even though no panelist answered those bids. There were nine scores which received scores from the Texas moderator and my panelists discussed two more calls: 4♦ (Davis), 5♣ (Bartusek)]*

3♥ for now. We won't get to 3NT, but that isn't likely to be the only spot anyways. The choice between 4♠ and 6♣ is the more important decision.

**Bartusek:** 3♥. An impossible problem - a complete guess. We have enough values to be in game, but I have insufficient room to determine whether it is 3NT, 4♠, or 5♣. I could just blast 3NT which often will be the best spot, but it could be silly with the diamonds wide open. I could cuebid 3♥ reaching 4♠ opposite a doubleton spade while settling in 5♣ otherwise. Hmmm...I think I'll choose the 3♥ cuebid route.

**Davis:** 3♥. RHO has stolen my 2♥ bid which makes bidding this hand inconvenient. We could belong in 3NT, 4♠, 5♣ or 6♣ and my only clear investigative bid is 3♥ which shows a good hand often with zero heart stoppers when I actually have a good hand with two heart stoppers. At least it is not matchpoints where I might be tempted to make the possibly silly bid of 3NT. After my 3♥ bid, I will raise 3♠ to 4♠, raise 4♣ to 5♣ and bid 6♣ over 4♦ or 4♥. The right bid is likely to be 4♦. What is 4♦? Well, that is the problem. It is a) a splinter in support of clubs, b) keycard with clubs as

trump or c) a strong 6-5 in spades and diamonds. If I knew that our partnership was in agreement on either a or b, that would be my bid. Although I think it should be a stiff diamond with slam interest in clubs, I would not gamble that partner and I were on the same wavelength.

**Wittes:** 3♥. The only better hand I could have for partner is the ♥A instead of ♥KJT. If partner has secondary diamond cards and ♥xxx, we might belong in 3NT, but we are playing IMPs. If partner has the very unlikely miracle hand of ♣KQJxxx and the ♦A, slam is a very good possibility.

**Dunitz:** 2♠. *[Mitch apparently plays 2♠ as forcing here, because I know he isn't fond of missing games.]*

**Mealymouth:** 3NT. 3NT is one of my options, and it is likely my last chance to bid it, so I'll bid it now. Isn't that what you told me 56½ years ago, Bob *[(Mealymouth is referring to Bob Hamman (who was born in Pasadena, attended UCLA, and was widely thought to be the world's top bridge player at one time). Hamman's Law is the maxim, "If you have a choice of reasonable bids and one of them is 3NT, then bid it.")]*, when we used to hang out at the Office, or have I misquoted you? If we miss a superior 4♠ or 6♣, it's my fault, for letting my partner talk me into playing those silly Weak Single-Jump Overcalls. In the good old days at the rubber bridge clubs where I played, I'd have started with 2♠, a strong (but of course not forcing) jump overcall typically based on a hand worth a 1♠ opening followed by a 3♠ jump rebid.

*[A couple more clues: Mealymouth is old enough to have spoken with Bob Hamman 56 years ago, and was a rubber bridge player. Are you guessing his identity?]*

**Goldsmith:** 3NT. What does partner need for us to make this? ♠x ♥xxx ♦JTxx ♣KQxxx?

*[This is IMPs, not matchpoints, but even at this form of scoring I am in favor of 3NT. Ed called it silly. I'll call it practical.]*

<div>3</div> <div>IMPs None Vul</div>	<div>West</div>	<div>North</div>	<div>East</div>	<div>South</div>
		<div>1♦</div>	<div>double</div>	<div>???</div>
	<div>You, South, hold: ♠1082 ♥QJ ♦Q8 ♣AJ7643</div> <div>What call do you make?</div>			

*[The reasonable choices look like redouble, 1NT, 2♣, and possibly a very heavy 3♣. The man who thinks this is an easy problem may go first.]*

**Shuster:** 1NT. Semi-balanced soft 10... seems too easy.

**Davis:** 1NT. I don't really like anything else. I have ten HCP but they are poor high cards and not worth a redouble. 2♣ is a possible bid but 1NT is a better description of my hand (which is balanced with enough strength [a good seven to poor ten HCP] to bid 1NT over the double). If the opponents bid 2♥ or 2♠, I will compete to 3♣.

**Wittes:** 2♣. I have the values for a redouble, but I don't have a big fit for partner, and my cards outside my suit could be of marginal value, so I'll soft pedal it.

**Bartusek:** 2♣. A good description of my hand (although a maximum with some wasted red suit values). I dislike redouble because my continuations will often be ambiguous and confusing to partner. It'll be impossible if LHO preempts at the 2-level since 3♣ would then be game-forcing.

**Dunitz:** 2♣.

**Goldsmith:** 2♣. Even if 3♣ were natural, the suit texture isn't good enough to withstand a responsive double and a pass.

**Mealymouth:** 2♣. As Daddy used to say, "What's the problem?" Don't tell me partner will think it's forcing. I'm not playing in a Novice Game, am I?

*[We have another Al Roth reference here. He was famous for the "What's the problem" line. But no, no, 1000 times NO, Mealymouth is not Roth's son).]*

*[I am sometimes asked how my transfer system over takeout doubles works. Playing my system, I would start with 1♠. This shows the 1NT values with a balanced hand and about 6 to 10 HCP. If I could bid 3♣ the next time around showing five or six broken clubs I would bid it.]*

<div style="font-size: 48pt; text-align: center;">4</div> <div style="text-align: center;">Matchpoints Both Vul</div>	West	North	East	South
		1♣	pass	1♥
	pass	2♣	pass	2NT
	pass	3♦	pass	???
You, South, hold: ♠J643 ♥AJ104 ♦AJ ♣954 What call do you make?				

*[The panel is shying away from 3NT with only ♠Jxxx in the unbid suit.]*

**Wittes:** 5♣. My ♠Jxxx of is looking very dubious for NT. I have great controls for partner, with prime cards in partner's second suit.

**Goldsmith:** 5♣. Partner is warning us about spades. Even if he has two small spades, it's hard to construct a 13-count that doesn't have play for 5♣. ♠xx ♥x ♦KQxx ♣AQJxxx? He'll not be worse than that.

**Mealy-mouth:** 5♣. Partner's 3♦, unlike 3♣, is forcing, and shows a hand just shy of a 3♣ jump rebid or 2♦ reverse last turn. With three clubs rather than two, and only a jack (rather than a king) wasted in spades opposite partner's likely low singleton, I like my hand, so I'll bid game in the most likely strain without muddying the waters. I wouldn't have put myself in this position by rebidding 2NT last turn. Instead, I'd have raised to 3♣, the safer contract opposite most hands with which partner would pass.

**Bartusek:** 5♣. Getting to a good 5♣ game will often be good enough when some of the field will be going down in 3NT at MPs. My 2nd choice is 4♥ which should be a cuebid in support of a minor and inviting slam with no spade wastage (but, I think I need a slightly better hand to bid it). 4♥ can't be an offer to play with 5 good hearts because I would bid 3♥ with that hand. But, there are a few problems with bidding

4♥ - 1) It is very unlikely that partner has the perfect hand, and partner is likely to bid poor 6♣ slams with ♠x ♥x ♦Kxxxx ♣AKQxxx or ♠x ♥Qx ♦KQxx ♣AKJxxx, 2) partner might assume diamonds are trumps and not allow me to get out in clubs (although 4♦ should probably be forcing), 3) partner might believe it is an offer to play.

*[Mark's suggestion that 3♥ is semi-natural bid and 4♥ is strong values is contrary to my thoughts and those of the following panelists. I'm in with Shuster and Davis on this one.]*

**Shuster:** 3♥. Partner won't know which minor I'm coming in, but he will know I'm worried about spades for 3NT. If partner can't bid 3NT, I'll bid 5♣.

**Davis:** 3♥. This should show values in hearts and it might enable partner to better decide where we should play. Partner should expect 5♣ to be a good contract if he has a stiff spade. Otherwise, partner will have to choose between 3NT and some number of clubs (I will pass 4♣).

*[Mitch also leaves 3NT as an option, but chooses a different bid.]*

**Dunitz:** 3♠. If partner can bid 3NT I will pass, otherwise 5♣ is the destination. *[Should 3♠ show more in spades and greater worry about hearts?]*



<div style="font-size: 48pt; text-align: center;">5</div> <div style="text-align: center;">Matchpoints E-W Vul.</div>	West	North	East	South
		1♣	pass	???
	You, South, hold: ♠QJ ♥9763 ♦Q5 ♣98754 What call do you make?			

**Wittes:** 3♣ (weak). West rates to have a good hand, so I'll make it harder for them to find their fit and level. I have one bid on this hand, and 3♣ seems to be it.

**Bartusek:** 3♣. This hand is so bad that preempting (playing inverted minors) seems mandatory to obstruct the opponents. Even if we have a heart fit it will probably be irrelevant unless partner has enough to bid over 3♣ (I'll raise 3♥ to 4♥). An immediate 1♥ call will make it too easy for my LHO to enter the auction and/or cause partner to overbid opposite this piece of garbage.

**Goldsmith:** 3♣. Seems pretty normal. Bad hand, good fit. Even if we catch a 4-4 heart fit, I have no useful cards for partner.

**Dunitz:** 3♣. assuming it is preemptive. NOT 1♥ - who wants a heart lead?

*[Yes, 3♣ is preemptive. It shows something like 0 to 8 HCP. That's a rather wide range to deal with. The late Grant Baze had a solution for that problem. He played that the next step (3♦) was an asking bid. It asked if the preemptor had a little stuff. If the preemptor had a little something, then he would bid 3♠, accepting 3NT, but allowing the strong hand to play it. If the preemptor had little (I would put the actual hand in that category) then the preemptor would bid 4♣ (4♦ if diamonds were the trump suit).*

**Mealymouth:** Pass. Thanks to David Berkowitz, Mitch McConnell probably considers Paul Trent and me to be to the right of Scalia and Thomas. Alas, Paul died too soon, so Mitch didn't appoint him to Scalia's seat, but if Thomas dies before I do, I expect President McConnell (with the consent of The Donald of course) to consider me for Thomas' seat. A special seat in Hell next to Ruth Bader Ginsburg is reserved for anyone who bids 1♥. If I bid anything with this piece of cheese (is it limburger or gorgonzola?), they won't think me conservative enough for the Supreme Court.

*[Is Mealymouth's train off the track? If you are going to refer to a former politician in a bridge column, I would suggest Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens or President Dwight D. Eisenhower, both of whom were good bridge players. If you want a current politician, I would suggest former Hawaii Attorney General Mark Bennett. Mark is currently a Justice of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit. He is also a Platinum Life Master. Mealymouth's opinion of Roth Bader Ginsburg is not shared by this moderator. I once taught a course entitled "The 100 Greatest Women in American History", she was on the list. I love most of what she did, except for reading the recording of her autobiography herself. She should have had it read professionally. So who is Mealymouth? We can eliminate Berkowitz, McConnell, Trent, Scalia, and Thomas. But beyond that, I'm still not revealing his identity!]*

**Davis:** Pass. Five HCP and five trumps. How could one pass partner's opening bid? To begin with, this is not like it would be if partner opened one of a major and we had five trumps where we know the opponents have a good fit somewhere. Here we may have only have eight trumps between us and they may have no more than one eight-card fit of their own. My five HCP are in the short suits where they might be worth little on offense (they might also be worth little on defense but on defense they are more likely to win a trick or help partner win a trick). IMO any bid overstates the value of this hand. That would be okay if it kept the opponents from getting to a making game but they are far from that as my RHO has already passed over 1♣ and we have between 16 and 24 HCP between us. It would not be a surprise if partner had a balanced hand too good to open a strong 1NT. In other words, this hand is at least as likely to belong to us as to the opponents. And, if it is our hand, we are more likely to get a plus score by passing 1♣ and later competing if necessary than by bidding 1♥ and risking partner jumping to something we cannot make (such as 3♥, 4♥ or 2NT).

**Shuster:** Pass. If you're going to pass a 1m in Standard, I suppose this is the hand for it. No suit you'd rather have as trumps, zero controls and 10 losers. Yes, we could have a grand on a 2-1 trump break without partner even being a max:

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♠AKxx ♥--- ♦Axxx ♣AKxxx. But we have to balance that optimism with a bit of practical realism... we just get too high to often when this hand responds. Welcome to standard bidding.

*[This is another old hand. The original panel had 14 panelists. Seven of them bid 3♣. Six of them tried 1♥ and there was one passer. One of the panelists quoted the former moderator of this column, Marshall Miles. He said Marshall stated "If hearts belong to us then I should bid them, but if hearts belong to the opponents than I should bid them". Anyone who quotes Marshall gets some love from me. If we beef the hand up a little Marshall would have bid 1♥, not 3♣. But I am certain Marshall would have passed the given hand. He hated light responses!]*